



Waugh's Ireland

It has overgrown Burke and Sheridan,
Left them as green and lonely as Goldsmith's
Village, where the windows are all that's left
Of history, broken and blind, empty.
Soft voices quarrel inside a cottage.
You inhale the mist and loose ambition,
Glad to be on the Fortunate Island.
Whatever wars rage, they aren't yours.
Should enemies drop out of the gray sky
May they be off to the dark north before
You even know they've come.

There: a northern
Country that never freezes, warmed the blood
Of Norse invaders as Scotland never
Could; and leaves you feeling overgrown
With moss, awash in fern, sinking in turf,
Taking root like a Celtic Orpheus
Who survives, convoluting the legend
Into a tale of an Englishman who
Wandered off during World War II, a fake
Passport sending him to a land where spies
May fall asleep. The only Gestapo
Agent known to kill himself overseas
Hanged himself in Dublin, leaving behind
A four word message: "They can't be trusted."
But they can, and the war-novel-ending
Gets it right: you move west, you dream east,
Becoming more of an unflagged man each
Mile, nearing the Atlantic, not sinking,
But deracinated, uprooted, blessed
By not even the ghost of a flag, just
Whatever banner you raise in your heart,
Whatever anthem you sing to yourself,
Dreaming of a paranymp to sing with,
Dreaming of the other Blessed Isles.

LAWRENCE DUGAN